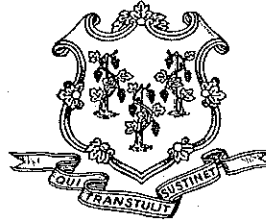


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Good morning Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. I would like to express my support for S.B. No. 164 AN ACT INCLUDING CERTAIN MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF "PERSONAL INJURY" UNDER THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION STATUTES.

This bill would ameliorate some of the unfortunate changes made to the workers' compensation law in 1993. Specifically, it would expand workers' compensation coverage to certain individuals (police officers and firefighters) suffering from a mental or emotional impairment as a direct result of witnessing the death or maiming of another human being whose death or maiming was caused by an act of a person. In recent years medical science has made it increasingly clear that a mental health impairment can be as disabling as a physical impairment. Unfortunately, our current statutes do not reflect this new understanding. SB 164 would require that the worker be diagnosed by a mental health professional who must determine that the impairment originated from witnessing the death or maiming or the immediate aftermath of the death or maiming. The immediate aftermath is limited to six hours after the scene is secured by law enforcement. The visual witnessing must also be causally connected to the employee's employment. Passage of this bill would allow workers who are suffering from specific work related mental trauma to benefit from workers' compensation. Many states in our region including MA, RI, NY and NJ¹ as

¹ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2014/rpt/pdf/2014-R-0080.pdf>

well as CO² and CA³ already allow these mental-mental workers' compensation claims; Connecticut should join them. This would be a positive change and would bring our statutes in line with the modern understanding of mental health.

I am pleased that this year's bill does not limit the coverage to an intentional act; it would seem that a person's mental impairment would not depend on whether or not the act she or he witnessed was intentional. I also support legislation that would not limit this coverage to police officers and firefighters. Thank you for hearing this extraordinarily important bill.

² <https://codes.findlaw.com/co/title-8-labor-and-industry/co-rev-st-sect-8-41-301.html>

³ <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/california-workers-comp-recovering-mental-emotional-injuries.html>